

**State Bar of California
California Young Lawyers Association
Board of Directors Member Responsibilities**

INTRODUCTION

Consistent with the governing practices of other governmental and nonprofit boards, one of the most important functions of the board is to make sure that prospective board members clearly understand and are ready, able, and willing to carry out the governing mission of the California Young Lawyers Association (CYLA). To assist potential candidates considering running for the board, the following list is designed to outline the basic skills and competencies necessary to succeed as a board member. Obviously, this list is general in nature and not exhaustive.

A. Board Member Skills and Responsibilities:

1. Be familiar with the mission and purpose of the State Bar of California and the CYLA. A statement of the mission, as well as information on the organization's goals, and operation will be available to all prospective members. Orientation and training will be provided so that new members understand this mission.
2. Once elected or appointed, members of the CYLA Board of Directors should attend and participate in all board meetings, committee meetings, and the annual meeting. Members should be made aware of the time commitment necessary to fulfill these obligations.
3. Members should allocate adequate time to prepare for meetings in advance in order to make sound decisions on behalf of the CYLA, its members and stakeholders. This requires review of substantial written material.
4. The board's primary relationship with the professional staff is through the staff liaison.
5. In order to effectively govern, members should be familiar with the existing governance structure of State Bar of California, the Board of Governors, and the CYLA Board of Directors so that each member can establish a good working relationship with other members of the board and staff.
6. Members should be knowledgeable about conflicts of interest. It is important for members to place the interests of the organization as a whole before personal, geographic, or special interest group concerns.
7. As members of the CYLA Board of Directors, we are the primary ambassadors for the State Bar. Each member should be prepared to represent the organization to its members and other bar constituents, including members of the public.
8. Members are encouraged to share their diverse skills and expertise when determining policy.

B. Minimum Standards of Commitment and Conduct:

1. **Meeting Attendance:** Absent emergency circumstances, members will be expected to attend all board and committee meetings on time.

2. **Meeting Protocol:** Members will be expected to be courteous to one another, guests and staff, avoiding personally directed comments. Board members should avoid interrupting other speakers and yield to the chair or president regarding the order to comment.
3. **Meeting Procedures:** Members recognize meetings are conducted according to board rules, supplemented by Roberts Rules of Order and relevant open/closed meeting rules and regulations.
4. **Confidentiality:** Members recognize that matters discussed in closed session are to be kept confidential subject only to open meeting reporting requirements.
5. **Member Education:** Members will be expected to learn about the State Bar and its operations and functions. This can be accomplished by attending scheduled orientations or by contacting the CYLA staff liaison.
6. **Staff Relations:** Members recognize staff are a resource and agree to treat staff with courtesy, recognizing the many demands of staff time. Members will endeavor to work with staff through the staff liaison.
7. **Expense Discipline:** Members recognize that the expenses of the CYLA Board of Directors are reimbursed from the General Fund which is funded by mandatory member dues. Members will familiarize themselves with and abide by State Bar of California Travel Reimbursement Policies as outlined in orientation materials. Members will employ expense discipline to minimize travel and other costs.
8. **Ethics and Prudence:** Members will act ethically and prudently in exercising their duties.
9. **Attorney Member Relations:** Elected members recognize the importance of CYLA member outreach, particularly within their district, and agree to regularly meet with CYLA members, local barrister or young/new attorney organizations, and volunteer groups, coordinating with the Office of Bar Relations Outreach.

C. Time Commitment:

Serving as a member of the CYLA Board of Directors is a time consuming obligation. Meetings, required research and reading, and outreach efforts can occupy as many as ten (10) hours per month. The Board of Directors meets formally six (6) times per year, with three (3) in-person meetings and three (3) conference calls, the average meeting taking six (6) to seven (7) hours on a Friday or Saturday. Committee meetings occur on a more ad hoc basis, but can entail one or more meetings per month. Combined with attendance at the mid-year Spring Summit and annual meetings of the State Bar of California, a member can expect to devote no less than one to two weeks of typical work-days per year to board efforts. Further information on about CYLA activities can be found at its web site, www.calbar.ca.gov/CYLA.